The IT Geek's
"Tip of the Week"

What's in a Strong Password?

Passwords are our first line of defense. In a manner of speaking, we are only as strong as our weakest password. Gaining unauthorized access to a computer on our network establishes a foot hold for the perpetrator to launch attacks against other (and perhaps more critical) systems.

You can help strengthen our defenses by using strong passwords. Microsoft defines strong passwords as those that contain <u>at least three</u> of the following four criteria.

- Uppercase letter (A-Z)
- Lowercase letter (a-z)
- Number (0-9)
- Special symbol (!, @, #, $, %, ^, &, *, (,), -, +, =, etc.)

Let's start by examining an example of a weak password. Even though it may seem strong and easy to remember, b4ucme2 is <u>*not*</u> a strong password because it only meets two of the four criteria (i.e., it only has lowercase letters and numbers). To qualify as a strong password, it would also need an uppercase letter and/or a special character.